

Chapter Four

After the first game of the season, the Patterson High football team looks good enough to win the league title. Their second game is Friday night and it's against another small school, Gustine High. Gustine is located 25 miles south of Patterson, and it has a population of about 5,000. Their stadium is unique in that it is completely surrounded by dairies, so you know what the air smells like. We play them in the preseason every year, and their stadium only holds about 300 people.

When we arrived at the stadium, we were all surprised to find that they have only 22 players on their team. At the same time, none of us can believe how few Gustine fans are in the bleachers. In fact, when the game finally started there were more Patterson supporters in the stadium. The entire game, Sal is on fire. He completes 22 of his 28 passes and throws for five touchdowns. Sal also runs the ball for another 75 yards. Coach Long uses the game as an opportunity to play everybody. The game was never close and it ends with a final score of 35 to 7. Throughout the entire game, I wished that I was out on the field.

I keep saying to myself, "Next year."

All I must do is go to school every day, stay out of trouble, and pass algebra. So far so good because I haven't gotten into any more trouble since I stuck my head in the Patterson Elementary flower petunia garden. At the same time, I have perfect attendance and I'm passing Mr. Phish's algebra class.

When Monday morning rolls around, Mambo Rosas surprises everyone by returning to school. Only this time he doesn't arrive in a patrol car. Instead, it is his mother who drops him off at school. His neck is still black and blue, and bandaged, but beyond that he looks the same. Personally, I'm glad to see him because it means that we have a chance of winning the Rosehaven Tournament. Mambo passes most of the morning hanging around with Chili "Pepper" Rodriquez.

Mr. Ortega is a good man and he's out to save us all, but I don't think that Mambo and some of his crew can be saved. I hear what Mr. Ortega keeps telling Mrs. Purdy. He believes that Mambo's close call with death has chilled him, but we all know different. I heard during yesterday's volleyball practice that Mambo isn't in a forgiving mood. At the same time, they said that he is mad as heck that his homies have been kicked out of school. Translated, this means that there's more to come.

No doubt about it, it's good to have Mambo back on the volleyball court. He's clearly one of the best volleyball players in the school. The Stanislaus County Blue Gum Juvenile Facility is where Mambo spends a lot of his time; they have both indoor and outdoor volleyball courts. They play rain or shine. Mambo's return to Del Cielo High means that we have a chance of winning a trophy. The important thing is that we believe in ourselves because we are the smallest school to be invited to the Rosehaven Volleyball Tournament.

According to tournament rules, we need one more girl besides Chili. Chico, the new kid, has been learning the game as fast as anyone that I've ever seen. He really likes to spike the ball in people's faces. Every time he strikes somebody in the head he smiles, which makes me think that his parents knew what they were doing when they brought him to Del Cielo High. Chico tells Wendell that he has played a lot of soccer in Mexico, and although the two sports are not related, he definitely shows signs of being an athlete. Chili Rodriguez and Wendell are both good setters. Chili is as good as any guy, and at the same time we have the height to win. Mambo, Chico, and I can all spike the heck out of the ball.

I have made up my mind that the only way I can be successful is to stay after school and finish my math homework before going to the skate park. If I just head to the skate park straight from school, then I'll forget about my homework. I see the same people at the park every night. All of them have signed up for the city skating championships on Saturday. Collin Craven, Eddie, and Mambo are all putting in a lot of practice time.

Mambo and his gang have been selling drugs in the skate park since the day it opened. Over the years, for the sake of my own health, I have tried to ignore his illegal activities, and as a result I have never paid much attention to his skills on a skateboard. This is because he spends so much time locked up that it is hard to believe that he would be any good on a

skateboard. However, I have been analyzing the competition, and Mambo stands a decent chance of getting in the Master Level Finals. Maybe he can't win it, but he is a pretty good skater with a decent assortment of tricks. This is despite his lack of practice time. His arch enemy Eddie Cruz is also in the park every night preparing, but unlike Mambo, he has no known natural talent and he doesn't stand much of a chance.

The Masters Level competition at the city championships is scheduled to begin at noon, and it is the very last event of the day. Most of the entrants have been on a skateboard their entire lives. After analyzing the entire pack, I think that I can beat everyone but Sal, which means that I have a good chance at second place. Then if everything goes right and I nail a 360 degree rotation without falling off my board, I can win the whole thing.

Late Friday morning, during 1st period Mr. Phish finally realizes that the Rosehaven Volleyball Tournament is less a week and a half away, and we still need one more girl player. This is despite the fact that I have been warning him for more than a month that we are in trouble. It's not his fault that we only have one girl player, Chili.

Unable to find an answer to his problem, he looks in my direction and then asks, "Tyrell, where are we going to find another girl player for the volleyball team? Do you have any ideas? If we can't find one then we're going to have call Rosehaven, and tell them that we are canceling."

I really didn't even have an idea.

Then finally I give Mr. Phish my reply, "We've asked every girl in the school, but most of them don't want to play. It's a rough game. I think that most of the pregnant ones are afraid that they'll have a miscarriage."

Mr. Phish stood there shaking his head not knowing what to do, and then finally he utters, "There must be one girl in the school that can play."

I spent the next minute trying to think of a girl to no avail, and then suddenly a miracle happened. Katrina Cortez locked eyes with me and smiled.

Completely startled, I return her smile, and with butterflies in my stomach I asked, "Mr. Phish, how about asking the migrant farm girls if one of them

wants to play.”

He replies, “I don't think so. I've asked the girls over and over if they would like to play, but none of them has ever played the game.”

“Mr. Phish, I don't think that we have a choice, unless of course, you know about a girl who is about to get kicked out of Patterson High,” I answered.

At last Mr. Phish realizes that there isn't another choice, and for the next couple of minutes he glares silently in the direction of the migrant farm girls. It is obvious to all of us that he is unable to decide. Then finally he swallows, and in Spanish he asks if one of them would like to be on the volleyball team. Unfortunately, not a single hand went up.

Then when we have all just about given up hope, to everyone's surprise, Katrina Cortez raises her hand.

In Spanish, a grinning Mr. Phish asks her, “Has jugado volleyball?”

She smiles and tells him, “No, pienso que es muchisimas diversion.”

Even those who didn't speak Spanish knew what that meant, “No she had never played, but volleyball looked like a lot of fun.”

I can tell that Mr. Phish is disappointed that he doesn't have an experienced player, but he has no choice but to give in.

Finally, he tells her, “It looks like you're on the team, Katrina.”

Immediately, Katrina gets really excited, almost rising out of her chair. At the same time her excitement spreads like contagion and the entire room broke out in applause. Then just when the applause abates the entire class erupts into a series of frenzied Del Cielo High Bulldog barks. The sound of the barks shakes the entire room, and when they ended all we can hear is Mambo's sinister laughs.

He snarls, “The Rosehaven Tournament is the biggest continuation school volleyball tournament in California. We can win it if we want it. I've played against a lot of those guys in juvenile hall and they've got nothing on us. We'll kick their rears. The first place trophy is ours if we want it.”

Everyone in the room shakes their heads in agreement. My next class is algebra, and it is immediately followed by P.E. When we finally all get out on the court and take sides the entire class is all jacked up. Now that we are officially going to the tournament it seems like everyone wants to be on the team, and the volleyball is moving so fast that I can't believe it. At the same time the rallies are longer and longer. If you can't keep up, then you're getting run over.

Friday night's Patterson High football game is against the Modesto High Panthers. It is going to be a real test for our guys because Modesto is a highly rated team. This is also the last preseason game. Modesto is the only big school that we will play against this season. They also play in a much harder league with bigger schools. However, Patterson's population is exploding because more and more people are moving here from the Bay Area. Coach Long says it's just a matter of time before we will have to play in a tougher division.

Friday afternoon my dad arrives home early so we can drive in to Modesto in time for the start of the game. This time, my parents let Lavonne invite two of her girlfriends along for the ride. The three of them all climb in through the back door of the van. Their names are Latisha and Kortney, and they have been hanging out at our house a lot lately. They both live around the corner on the next street. All three of them are boy crazy. One by one they are taking turns rating the boys at the middle school. At the same time, they are putting on makeup and taking turns spraying on cheap perfume. After a while there wasn't any air in the van.

The drive between Patterson and Modesto is pretty boring. The entire way into town both sides of the road are lined in almond and walnut trees. There are also a lot of fields that are planted in alfalfa, corn, tomatoes, onions, and beans. My dad says that the entire Central Valley has not recovered from the economic downturn, and that there are no jobs available locally except in farming. I'm almost 16 years of age, and it seems like the economy has been in a downturn all my life.

By the time we reach the outskirts of Modesto the three girls have succeeded in driving the three of us crazy. My father's solution to the incessant talking is to turn up the volume on his favorite country western station, but when he does the girls only talk louder. Finally, I decide to just

try and ignore them.

Tonight's game was moved to the Modesto Junior College Stadium because they are expecting a large crowd. The Modesto High football team has also won its first 2 preseason games, and they are expected to be contenders for their league title. It takes a while before we finally found a parking place, and before we can even get out of the van we are getting all kinds of static from the people who are cheering for Modesto High. This is because Lavonne, Kortney, and Latisha, all have Patterson High pompoms. It is also because my parents are dressed in Patterson High Tiger red and gray sweat shirts.

Just a short time after we sit down in the visitors section, the Patterson Junior Varsity fumbles the ball. According to the scoreboard we are losing 32-7, in the fourth quarter. The people in the stands are quick to tell us that Modesto High is playing their second and third string. It doesn't look good for our junior varsity, but I'm sure our varsity will do a better job.

The varsity game starts right at 8 o'clock. The referee tosses the coin and we win, electing to receive. Modesto then kicks the ball out of the end zone, and we take over on the 20 yard line. It doesn't take long before everyone in the stands realizes how badly we are outmatched. Their linemen are enormous. They had six guys as big as Chad Campbell. On the very first play they sacked Sal and ground his helmet into the dirt, and on the next two downs he is forced to run for his life. Now it is 4th down and we need 17 yards, so Coach Long elects to punt.

Modesto's punt returner takes the ball to their 40 yard line, and only three plays later they score their first touchdown. The extra point is good, and then once more they kick the ball into the end zone. The very next set of downs, Sal tries his best to avoid getting sacked, but it was hopeless. Finally, our line completely collapses and their largest lineman picks up Sal like a sack of potatoes and throws him on the ground. The crunch is so loud that it is heard in every corner of the stadium, silencing everyone. Soon afterward, the Patterson fans emit a huge gasp when they realized that Sal isn't moving. He didn't have a chance.

Both coaches rush onto the field with their assistants, and they quickly surround Sal. Then after a couple of minutes of preparation they placed him onto a stretcher. Carefully, they load him into the ambulance for the

ride to the hospital. We all hope that he will wave to the crowd, but there is no response. Then someone in the crowd says that he has been knocked unconscious. Sal is followed into the ambulance by his mother, who has a firm grip on his hand. The second she is inside they turn on the flashing lights and took off. Just seconds later Sal's father walks up to the cheerleaders, where he finds Sunny in tears. Sal's dad asked her if she would ride with him to the hospital.

Our second string quarterback Ernie Potter is a freshman. Ernie still hasn't reached his growth spurt, and he is only 5 foot 2 inches tall. Until tonight he's only played a few downs against Gustine High. In defense of Ernie, he should be scared. At times it looks more like pin the tail on the donkey than a football game. Just as soon as they hike Ernie the ball he takes off running for his life with the Modesto linemen in hot pursuit. He doesn't stand a chance. Ernie ends the night with negative yards, and the final score is 42-0. We never played one down on their side of the field, and it would have been worse if they hadn't taken out their starters.

After the game my mom and dad insist on going by the hospital to see how Sal is doing. When we finally arrive at the Modesto Hospital the main waiting room is filled with people from Patterson. The first person we see in the room is Sunny Luna.

Sunny tells us, "He's hurt really bad. The doctors have already said that he's out for the season. I can't believe it, Tyrell."

Only a couple of minutes later Sal's father steps out of the elevator to give everyone an update. From the look on his face I can tell that he is obviously shaken up.

He says, "Sal's awake. He has a few broken ribs. They're going to do a brain scan on him in a little while, as a precaution. It looks like he's out for the season. The doctor says that he'll have to stay in bed for several weeks. Tyrell, he asked to see you."

Without hesitating, I follow Mr. Marquez into the elevator and he pushes the button for the third floor. Then when we enter Sal's room his mother is in tears. The moment I enter the room I am surprised when Sal manages to grimace an awkward smile. His eyes are swollen, and there are tubes running in and out of him. It is obvious that he has been knocked

senseless.

Finally, Sal manages to speak, "Tyrell, it looks like the football season may be over for me."

"Oh, come on Sal. You can't mean it," I replied.

He responds, "My ribs are broken and I hurt everywhere. I hurt worse than I ever hurt in my life. They say I have to stay in bed for weeks without moving. Those Modesto linemen are huge. I can't believe that those guys are in high school. I couldn't find our receivers."

I didn't want to hear what he was saying.

I told him, "Sal you always heal quickly. If I know you, you'll be back on the field in a couple of weeks."

His face grimaces in pain when he responds, "I hope so Tyrell, but that brings up tomorrow. You and I have skated together since we were little kids. Only you know how much I wanted to win the city skateboard championships. I'll be back next year."

"Sure you will, Sal, you'll win it next year. Nobody in town can ride a skateboard like you," I told him.

Tears well up in his eyes and I can tell that he is struggling for consciousness.

Then not more than a moment later a nurse enters the room and declares, "Everybody needs to get out of the room so that we can load him onto the gurney and take him into x-ray."

I have no idea how long he had been knocked out. I'm sure that all of the people in the waiting room want to see him, but that isn't going to happen tonight. Finally, we get back in to the van and head home. We are all in a real somber mood. The entire way home, I keep hearing the sound of him getting crunched. It was horrifying. I can't believe how hard he got hit, and how loud it sounded. Then after we are about half way home my attention turned to skateboarding, and I began thinking about the tricks that I am going to perform in tomorrow's championship. Now, with Sal out, I can win

the whole thing.

The next day I took off for the Patterson Skateboard Park early so that I can pay the \$10 registration fee and get my number. At the same time, I have some new stick-um that I want to try on the surface of my board. Everyone in the tournament is required to wear a helmet with knee and elbow pads. My helmet and pads are all black, so they match my hair. I am surprised by how many people are in the park. It seems like the whole town is here.

By the time I arrive, the first three tiers are almost finished. These are the tiers that feature the elementary kids. Just as soon as they are done, the middle school kids are going to battle it out. The Master's Division, which is my level, will follow immediately afterward. I am really surprised when I looked over at the judges table and realize that Mr. Phish, Clint Boreman, and Sergeant Sanchez are the judges.

Points are scored according to level of difficulty, tricks, and originality. Each participant gets 3 minutes of skate time to do their thing. Then, after everyone has skated the judges choose the 4 finalists. The Final Four then perform a 5 minute routine for the championship.

Soon after the youngest kids are finished, I decide to get something to eat. Mrs. Purdy and Mrs. Boreman are in charge of the refreshment booth. I purchase a hot dog from them and then sit down on a bench to watch the festivities. Then to my surprise, I spot Lavonne's friends Kortney and Latisha waiting their turn to skate. I have never seen them at the park before, so I am amazed when both of them turn in respectable runs. They are in the girls 13 and 14 year old tier, and from what I have seen of the other runs, they probably each won a trophy.

When it is almost 12 o'clock, all of the skaters in the Masters Division are told over the intercom system to gather in front of the judges' box. From the looks of things, everyone who signed up, has shown up. Then about a minute later Clint Boreman gets out of his chair, removes his baseball cap, and then walks around to the front of the judges' table.

He states, "I put the numbers 1 to 12 in my hat. Everybody needs to reach inside it and pick a number. The skater who picks the number 1 will go first, followed by 2 and so on."

Eddie Cruz is surprised when he picks the number 1. He will be followed by Collin Craven, Mambo Rosas, and then finally it will be my turn.

Mambo's associates, One-eyed Joey Galvan, Tiny Garcia, and Jesus Christo Reyes are all sitting in front of the viewing stands under a tree, on the far side of park. Gang colors are not allowed during the tournament, but they are all wearing red tennis shoes and belts.

I am really surprised to discover that my friend from Patterson Elementary, Dalton McCoy has entered the contest. He will skate directly after me. I am surprised because I rarely see him at the Patterson Skateboard Park. This is probably because his family lives on a remote ranch about 10 miles up Del Puerto Canyon.

The second after we all pick out of the hat I walk over to shake his hand and say, "Hello."

I remarked, "I haven't seen you at the skate park much this year."

"We live so far up the canyon that it is hard for me to come to the park, so my dad built a half-pipe on our property. It's actually pretty cool," he said.

Just then, Mr. Boreman announced, "It's time for the big event of the day. Will the participants in the Masters Division, please get in line."

Just as soon as we are lined up in order, he explains the rules, "One skater leaves the judges' platform every two minutes. If you run into another skater you are disqualified. The first routine is 3 minutes. Only the top 4 will make it into the finals. Creativity and the level of difficulty count heavily on your scores. We will be starting immediately. Eddie Cruz, you're first up."

Eddie looks like a nervous wreck as he waits for his heat. Then when he takes off, he immediately wipes out. Next up is Collin Craven, and he roars past Eddie like he is standing still. Collin gets some decent height off the first small ramp, and then he impresses the entire crowd when he nails a 180 degree Ollie perfectly. You can watch his confidence soar as he heads for the mega ramp for a 360 degree turn. Moments later Collin hits his landing, hard, and maybe it isn't pretty, but he is still on his board. I don't

believe it. I have been trying to do that trick for a year. Collin receives a huge roar from the crowd, not surprisingly; Leticia Lopez's voice is the loudest. She and Sunny Luna are watching in the viewing stands, and they are cheering for him like crazy.

Only two minutes later, Mambo attempts to impress the judges by going for some major air. He then manages to complete a clean 180 Ollie. This trick alone will probably put him in the Final Four. His subordinates, Jesus, Joey, and Tiny Garcia, are all going crazy every time he completes a trick.

Finally, it is my turn. I know that if I am going to beat Collin then I am really going to have to get major air. I start my routine with a front-side tail-slide across a bench, which is a trick that no one else in town can do, and I follow it with a 180 degree Ollie off of a small ramp. Then when it seems like everything is going as planned I made up my mind to try a 360 degree turn. This trick will guarantee my place in the finals. My takeoff couldn't have gone better, but just as I finished my rotation everything falls apart as my time ends and I tumble across the pavement.

Skating right on my tail is Dalton, and as I get up off of the ground I realize that he is putting in a fantastic performance. He is like a wild man on the course. Dalton sails through the air like he has wings, and as smoothly as possible he completes a 360 like it is nothing. The crowd loves it. At this point I am getting nervous about making it into the Final Four.

Just as soon as the last person finishes their heat, we gathered around the judges' stand to wait for our results. None of us can believe how long it took to arrive at a decision. Finally, Clint Boreman announces over the intercom that they have the results.

He gets out of his chair, and announces, "Here it is folks. It was really close, but we have a decision. It looks like the Final Four are Collin Craven, Mambo Rosas, Dalton McCoy, and Tyrell Walker."

Tiny, Jesus, and Joey all went crazy screaming. At the same time, Leticia and Sunny looked pretty excited themselves. The moment they quieted down, Mr. Boreman goes over the rules.

Once more he tells us, "Everyone skates this time for 5 minutes. The top 3 get trophies. If you run into another skater you're disqualified. May the best

man, win.”

None of the 8 guys that had been eliminated liked what they had heard, especially Eddie. Each one felt like they should be in the Final Four. I am surprised that Mambo has made it. In my opinion, many of the others were equally as good. One more time we picked out of a hat. Only this time Mambo picked number 1, Danny picked number 2, Collin number 3, and I picked number 4, which is alright as far as I was concerned.

Just a minute later, Mr. Boreman signals for Mambo to start his routine. The first trick he tries is grinding the rail, but half-way through the trick he loses his balance and bails. Then by the time he managed to get back on his board Dalton had already roared pass him and was sailing through the air like he is ready to fly. It is now clear to everyone that Dalton can win it. This time his routine is flawless. Shortly after Dalton finishes, Collin took off. He starts with unbelievable 180.

Again, I hear Leticia's voice, “Go, Collin!”

Collin turns and waves in her direction. He then pushes his board around the lip of the bowl as fast as he can before heading straight for the mega-ramp. Everyone is on the edges of their seats for what they expect to be the biggest trick of the day, a backward 360° when suddenly out of nowhere a folding chair flies through the air. Without warning, the chair hits the ramp with a loud smack, right in front of the approaching Collin, who doesn't have a chance. The second he made contact with the chair he flew end over end hitting a concrete wall head first. Collin hit with a thud and didn't move. None of us can believe what we are seeing. Then suddenly, Leticia jumps out of her seat and starts screaming at Tiny Garcia so loudly that everyone in the park can hear her. Then only a moment later both Leticia and Sunny are swinging their purses at his head.

Mr. Phish and Clint Boreman immediately rush onto the course to see if Collin is alright. Then as Leticia continues to scream, Tiny Garcia starts laughing in their faces which just makes things worse.

At the same time, I turn to the judge's stand, and Sergeant Sanchez is looking in the same direction as everybody else.

I said, “Sergeant Sanchez, I think Tiny threw that chair.”

He replied, "You might be right."

Without hesitating, Sergeant Sanchez gets on his phone and calls for backup. I can hear him telling the dispatch that it is the First Street Boyz again. At first I just stand there watching, but then that stupid Tiny grabs Sunny by the hair, and it looks like she needs help. I jumped on my board and in just seconds I reach the far end of the bowl, and hot on my heels are both Eddie and Dalton.

The second I jump off my board I shout in his face, "Tiny, get your hands off of Sunny now."

Tiny just stood there acting stupid with his mouth open, so I smack him square between the eyes. Unfortunately, the punch has little effect, and he still isn't letting go of Sunny's hair. So once more I hit him with everything I have, only this time I sock him in the stomach, and finally he buckles over and lets her go. It's at this time that Mambo comes after me with a vengeance. He throws a sucker punch at my head with his right hand, but I saw it coming out of the corner of my eye. I respond with a flurry of punches to his head, and the war is on. Then for the next couple of minutes we stood toe to toe exchanging punches until finally Sergeant Sanchez separates us.

Just a few minutes later half of the Patterson Police Department arrives, and breaks up the fight between Dalton and a badly defeated Jose Reyes. Only then do I realize that Eddie has plummeted One-eyed Joey. Mambo is having a tough time staying on his feet, and there is blood running from his mouth and nose. Moments later, the police order us all to line up against the bathroom, and spread eagle so they can search us for weapons. When they are finished patting us down, they put us all in handcuffs. One by one they place the four First Street Boyz in the back of patrol cars, and they place Dalton, Eddie, and me in the back seat of Sergeant Sanchez's patrol car.

The instant Sergeant Sanchez closes the door, I can hear Mambo yelling at Tiny, "Look at the mess you got me in, Tiny."

After all of the melee, I have forgotten about Collin. He is now on his feet, and trying to shake off the crash. Before long he turns in our direction and

gives us a thumbs up. About ten minutes later, the patrol cars turn on their flashing lights and we are on our way to the Patterson Police Station.

From the backseat of the patrol car I asked, "Sergeant Sanchez, you're not going to let those First Street Boyz wreck the tournament, are you? I practiced all year for this; I need to go back to the skate park. I haven't had my turn."

The sergeant answered, "The skateboard tournament is over."

I replied, "You can't be serious, a year of practice is wasted because that stupid Tiny threw a folding chair. Look, I don't even like Collin Craven. I can win the city championships, just give me a chance."

Sergeant Sanchez said, "No, Tyrell, a year's worth of practice was wasted because you punched Tiny between the eyes. Matter of fact, Mambo doesn't look very good either."

Wow, I can't believe what he is saying.

Angrily, I fought back, "What do you expect? That stupid Tiny was dragging Sunny around by the hair. Tiny threw that chair at Collin, and to be honest with you it felt really good when I smacked him in the head. I mean, everybody in town is scared of those guys."

No sooner had I finish talking when both Eddie and Dalton broke out laughing. They were laughing because we had just held our own against the worst gangsters in town, in front of the whole town.

Still angry that we were being arrested, I refused to give in, "Sergeant Sanchez, I did what I had to do. Please take me back to the skate park."

Sergeant Sanchez stares into his rear view mirror, "Dalton, I don't see you in town much. Where are you going to school?"

"I've been at Harney School in Del Puerto Canyon. I got kicked out for fighting, so I'm going to have to start Del Cielo High next week."

"Well, that should be interesting, a lily white kid like you, in the middle of gangster paradise," Sergeant Sanchez replied.

Only seconds later, we pull into a parking space behind the police station, and Eddie says, "I sure hope you guys aren't going to lock me up again. It's not like I stole a car. I mean, I just got out of juvenile hall."

Sergeant Sanchez looked at Eddie and just shook his head. He then turns off the ignition and opens the door so that we can all get out. In the parking lot is Sunny's car. I'm sure that she and Leticia are already inside the station.

Shortly after entering the building I spot Sunny in the hallway, and she says, "We already called your dad and told him what happened. He's on his way here."

"Thank you, Sunny."

I am sure that my dad is going to explode. I have been told repeatedly by my parents to stay out of trouble this year, with no excuses. Once inside the station, they immediately separate each of us into different interrogation rooms. Almost as soon as the door closes, Sergeant Sanchez starts telling me about all the trouble I was in for assaulting Tiny and Mambo, but I didn't believe him. How can I possibly be in trouble? Surely, he hated Mambo and Tiny just like everybody else in town.

Sergeant Sanchez asks, "Are all of you guys in the Latin Kings?"

"I'm not in any gang, Sergeant Sanchez. I hang out with Eddie because he likes sports and he's in my algebra class," I answered.

Less than a minute later, through the window in my interrogation room, I can see my dad coming through the front door. He is as angry as I have ever seen him. The second he enters the police station, Leticia and Sunny gave him a big hug.

I can hear Sunny as she tells him how I had stood up to the First Street Boyz. My dad didn't need to hear another word. He doesn't like gangs.

Only seconds later, he opens the door to the interrogation room, and in Sanchez's face he declares, "I'm here to get my son. I just talked to Sunny and she says that Tiny threw a chair at Collin Craven, and that the police

didn't do anything about it.

Sergeant Sanchez responds, "Mr. Walker, we haven't had time to do anything about it. Right now we're just trying to get to the bottom of this."

"From what I hear, my boy did your job for you. Where were you guys when Sunny got attacked. I hear that the First Street Boyz had it coming. Isn't it about time somebody stood up to those Norteños?"

"I'm sorry for the inconvenience Mr. Walker, but there were a lot of punches thrown. We're just trying to find out what happened. It looked like a gang war out there. Those boys wrecked the entire city tournament, and I have already heard from the mayor. Word spreads quickly in Patterson, and he wants someone to answer for what happened."

"It sounds to me like Mambo and Tiny wrecked the tournament. Tyrell, tell me son, what happened, who threw the chair?" my dad asked.

"I didn't see who threw the chair. You'll have to ask Leticia and Sunny. All I know is that Tiny had Sunny by the hair, and I told him to let her go, and he didn't so I smacked him."

"You knocked Mambo senseless," said Sergeant Sanchez.

"Evidently, he didn't have any sense to begin with or he wouldn't have picked a fight with me. I spent the entire summer pushing around a big ass carpet cleaner," I replied.

My dad smiled, "He sure did, and Mambo and Tiny spent the entire summer selling drugs on the corner of 1st Street and West Main. Every time I drove down West Main, there they were on the corner with their pit bulls. Since when does the Patterson Police Department defend drug dealers?"

"All right, Mr. Walker, I get your point. I'm going to release Tyrell to your custody and we'll probably charge Tiny with mischievous mischief, a misdemeanor for throwing the chair. Your boy can go."

"What about Dalton and Eddie?"

"They assaulted Jesus Christo Reyes and Joey Galvan," Sergeant

Sanchez said.

My jaw dropped open when I thought about somebody getting arrested for assaulting Jesus and Joey.

I said, "Are you kidding me? You're going to arrest Dalton and Eddie for defending Sunny. They're the leaders of the First Street Boyz. Sergeant Sanchez, you should be giving them an award."

He replies, "You know darn well that Eddie is the leader of the Latin Kings."

It was hopeless, and my chances for the city championship had vanished. I can't wait to get out of the police station. At the same time, I am disappointed that Sunny and Leticia have left before I had a chance to thank them. I'm sure that they are worried about Collin.

Once inside the van, my dad doesn't hesitate to voice his concern, "Tyrell, I'm proud of the way you stood up against the First Street Boyz, but I'm afraid that we're going to have problems with those boys down the road."

Tyrell Walker Chapter Four Questions

Answer using complete sentences

1. How well does Collin Craven do in his first routine?
2. Who makes it into the Final Four?
3. How did Dalton skate on his final routine?
4. What happens when Collin attempts to perform a backward 360 degree turn?
5. How did Tyrell react when Tiny grabbed Sunny Luna by the hair?
6. Do you personally believe that Tyrell's actions were correct?
7. Why does Sargent Sanchez say Tyrell lost a year of practice?
8. What does Tyrell tell Sargent Sanchez in his defense?
9. How did Mambo and Tiny spend their summer?
10. What does Tyrell's father tell him once they are inside the van?